

EDUCATION PROPOSAL

October 2006

Proposal for Consideration: The NRDP proposes to provide a base-level education program to educate school children about the injury to and restoration of natural resources through a contracted service effort administered by the NRDP instead of through the existing restoration grants process.

Background: The *UCFRB Restoration Plan, Procedures, and Criteria (RPPC)* provides for the consideration and funding of education projects that are specific to the restoration or replacement of natural resources in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin (UCFRB) via the following provision (p. 51):

The Restoration Fund may be used for educational efforts that specifically pertain to the natural resources or services that were the subject of Montana v. ARCO or to acceptable replacements of those resources or services. Educating the public, including school children, about restoration can enhance public stewardship of natural resources. Enhanced stewardship will foster protection of restored resources and thereby contribute to effective restoration in the long-term. Education projects may also involve collection of monitoring data that can augment the State's restoration monitoring efforts.

To date, education projects that have produced products for use in the schools or involved classroom activities and field trips have been funded both directly by the NRDP as a contracted service and through the grants process. Refer to the attached summary table of all education projects funded to date. Six projects have been funded for a total of \$851,802, with the largest award of \$673,801 to Montana Tech for implementation of the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP) in 29¹ Basin schools over a 3-year period, subject to annual reviews by an Evaluation Committee and approvals by the Trustee Restoration Council.

Rationale for the Proposal: Inclusion of a base-level education program as a contracted service allows one entity to oversee the coordination of education projects in the schools to assure that all educational projects meet the same high standards without overlap or duplication. Providing for public involvement is one of NRDP's administrative functions set forth in the *RPPC* (p. 53). The NRDP believes that this base component of educational outreach fits more appropriately as an administrative function rather than project by project under the grants process. The *RPPC* process and criteria are more oriented to projects that involve actual restoration or replacement, rather than educational outreach about restoration and restoration projects. This revised process for the base educational component would ensure a basin-wide coordinated approach for education projects that target or serve schools in the UCFRB. It would allow for a holistic, watershed-wide approach and ensure that a base-level program is provided yearly without interruption, as can occur via the grants process. As a contracted service, this base-level educational outreach becomes an integral part of administration of the program during the time the State is conducting its major restoration effort in the basin.

¹ The application indicated 29 schools would be covered. After initial implementation it was decided to eliminate six elementary schools and cover those children at the middle school level.

Outline of Proposal:

A. BASE-LEVEL EDUCATION – to be provided via contracted services

The NRDP would develop the scope of and hire a contractor to provide a base-level education that would be available to all children in the Basin. The base level of education would be structured similar to the Track 1 program currently being implemented by CFWEP along with corresponding teachers' education.² Track 1 involves 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students, with the grade level to be determined by the individual school districts. This track includes two classroom visits introducing students to basic water and stream science. These lessons will include hands-on activities related to water cycle, stream processes and sediment transport, groundwater flow, and water quality. The students will then be taken on a field trip to selected locations in the UCFRB. The field trip is then followed up by an additional classroom visit. During the field trip, students will measure stream flow, water quality, macroinvertebrate density and diversity and habitat health at baseline, injured, and restored reaches in the UCFRB. There will also be follow-up classroom activities.

Procurement would comply with the Montana Procurement Act. A yearly budget with expected milestones will be established by the NRDP and its contractor with oversight from the current Evaluation Committee.³ The commitment of NRDP funding will be on a year-to-year basis. The milestones of the previous year will be reviewed and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee. Recommendation of whether or not to continue funding will be brought forth yearly to the Advisory Council and then the TRC for final funding decision. One of the milestones for the contractor would be the continuation of additional grant writing and the pursuit of other funding sources. Other milestones would be established with input from the Advisory Council, the Evaluation Committee, and the NRDP staff. Funding can be discontinued at this time for any reason.

The following sentence would be added to the referenced section of the *RPPC* above: **As part of the educational services, the State will administer a base-level education program to educate school children about the injury to and restoration of the natural resources and services.**

B. BEYOND THE BASE PROGRAM – funding considered via existing grants process

The existing grants process would continue to be used for proposals of education projects beyond the base-level education. These projects would follow the established project development grant or regular grant cycle process, depending on the amount of the request, and be evaluated according to the *RPPC* evaluation criteria. For education projects, the applicant would need to justify why the proposed additional educational outreach is warranted and address how the

² Currently the CFWEP does not include Missoula schools; however, the addition of the Missoula schools is being evaluated.

³ While the existing members may change over time, the make up of the members would remain the same, namely, a professional educator not involved in the base-level education project or a representative of the Office of Public Instruction, a member of the NRDP staff, an Advisory Council member, and a member of the Trustee Restoration Council.

project integrates and coordinates with the existing NRDP's base-level education program in the schools via the "Coordination and Integration" *RPPC* criterion. This requirement is reflected in the bolded addition below to the existing language for this criterion:

Coordination and Integration: Under this criterion the State will consider whether, how, and to what extent a restoration project is coordinated or integrated with other ongoing or planned actions in the UCFRB, in addition to the coordination with EPA response actions that is separately addressed under the "Results of Response Actions" criterion. Restoration projects that can be efficiently coordinated with other actions may achieve cost savings. Moreover, not viewing projects in isolation will allow the State to take advantage of synergistic effects that produce benefits disproportionate to the costs of a particular project. **Under this criterion, for proposed projects with an educational component, the State will also evaluate whether the project adequately coordinates and integrates with the State administered base-level education program provided to schools.**

A similar type of change was made to the Ecosystems Considerations criterion in the *RPPC* to address consistency of projects with the approved *Silver Bow Creek Watershed Restoration Plan*.

C. Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP) – contracted services for fiscal years (FY) 2009-2012

Through a 2004 grant, CFWEP successfully implemented a similar program beginning with 2005/06 school year (FY06). That program met or exceeded its milestones in implementation in the 05/06 school year and has been approved for continuation in the 06/07 school year. If the CFWEP continues to successfully meet its milestones, it is likely that the 3rd year of its grant funding for implementation in the 07/08 school year would be approved.

Since the CFWEP has appropriately met its milestones and has established a base-line educational component, NRDP proposes to contract directly with Montana Tech to continue the CFWEP on a yearly basis for a maximum of up to four additional years beyond the initial 3-year grant. This option is acceptable from a procurement standpoint as the Montana Procurement Act does not apply to either grants or contracts between the State and its political subdivisions or other governments, in this case the University of Montana at Montana Tech (MCA 18-4-132). After four years (FY12), or if funding is discontinued before that four years is up, the NRDP would issue a request for proposals for implementation of a program on a yearly basis for up to seven years. This timeframe of going to competitive procurement after seven years is consistent with the provision of the Montana Procurement Act that specifies a seven year maximum length of contracts for supplies or services (MCA 18-4-313). The NRDP follows a similar procurement approach for other contracted services such as monitoring services: contracts are renewed on an annual basis for up to seven years for those entities that have been competitively procured and are providing adequate service.

D. Necessary steps for consideration and approval of these changes to the RPPC:

- Approval of the Evaluation Committee – October 27, 2006
- Approval of UCFRB Citizens Advisory Council – November 14, 2006
- Approval from Trustee Restoration Council – December 4, 2006
- Changes to *RPPC* out for public comment – December 8, 2006 – January 8, 2007
- Final recommendation from Trustee Council
- Decision by Governor in January

A decision about this proposal is necessary by January 2007 in order to allow sufficient time for entities seeking to provide educational outreach to the schools to prepare grant applications for consideration in the 2007 Grant Cycle for implementation beyond the 07/08 school year if the proposal is not approved.

Education projects funded by Montana NRDP as of 9/06

Education projects funded by Montana NRDP as of 9/06Project	Description	Cost	Funding Method
Multi-media Presentation (completed 10/00)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for primary through middle school children. • Interactive computerized presentation detailing mining and smelting history of the UCFRB. • Describes injury to the areas natural resources. • Discusses ongoing remediation and restoration efforts and goals. 	\$17,941	RFP; Contracted Services
Re-design of Multimedia Presentation (completed 10/01)	Updates and improves on original multi-media presentation	\$2,500	Contracted Services
Educational Trunk (developed 5/02); marketing on-going	Provides hands-on activities associated with the concepts presented in the multi-media project	\$25,000 development; \$12,500 marketing	Contracted Services
Restoring Silver Bow Creek CD (completed 4/04)	Provides visual footage of remediation and restoration activities and explanatory commentary from community members and restoration scientists	\$25,000	Contracted Services
Pilot Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (7/03); completed (7/04)	Pilot watershed education project focusing on sixth grade classes in Butte	\$25,000	PDG
Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP) – (Gov. approved 12/04) Year 1 – 05/06 school year Year 2 – 06/07 school year Year 3 – 07/08 school year	MT developed and is implementing a 3-year watershed education program for students and teachers in 29 schools from Butte to Bonner. Each phase of the program includes student and teacher training in the classroom and the field. Students will use Silver Bow Creek and the Clark Fork River as large-scale outdoor laboratories in a field science program.	\$673,801	Grants Program
Ramsay School Project (TRC approved 11/04)	MBMG developed and is implementing an educational program for Ramsay school that teaches about the watershed and ecosystem in Ramsay area using Silver Bow Creek as an outdoor classroom.	\$16,151	Grants Program
Bird Education Program	The Avian Science Center at U. of MT will develop and implement a bird banding education program in UCFRB in 2006/2007.	\$24,995	Grants Program
Milltown Education Pilot	The Watershed Education Network (WEN) will develop a Milltown-specific curriculum and field trip program for 8 th grade students & teachers under the umbrella of the CFWEP.	\$23,914 WEN; \$5,000 CFWEP	Grant Program & Contracted Services
Total Approved Education		\$851,802	
Total Approved 56 Grant Projects	Education projects - 2% of total approved grant projects.	\$39,088,953	